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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

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January 7, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
H-232, The Capitol  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

On January 21, 2009 — his first day in office as President of the United States — Barack Obama promised the American people “a new era of openness in our country” in which “transparency and the rule of law will be the touchstones.”

The President’s stated commitment to unprecedented transparency and openness echoed your own earlier claims, when you promised the American people that your leadership team would personally oversee the implementation of “the most honest, most open, and most ethical Congress in history.”

We, the Republican members of the House Committee on Rules, agree wholeheartedly with these noble goals. In fact, as the minority party’s representatives on the Committee tasked with providing transparency and due process in House deliberations, we have offered literally hundreds of failed motions over the last three years in pursuit of these goals.

Unfortunately, we are concerned that in the rush to pass an unprecedented and unpopular experiment with our nation’s health care, Congress’ execution of these stated principles has fallen well short of the mark set by you and President Obama.

Despite President Obama’s pledge as a candidate that negotiations on any healthcare reform would be broadcast on C-SPAN, both the House and Senate sent versions to the floor that had been hammered out behind closed doors. In the House, in particular, the floor proceedings that were broadcast were nothing more than a formality. Unfortunately, your decision to drastically restrict the amendments allowed for consideration meant there was little real debate for the public to see.

But there is still a chance to make this right. We believe that the American people deserve to know and to understand the contents of the proposed 2,000-plus page legislation. To achieve this common-sense goal, we also believe that the people's House can live up to the lofty ideals supported by you and the President by honoring C-SPAN's request to cover all future negotiations — including any Rules Committee deliberation — on the health care overhaul legislation before it is sent to the House floor for a final vote.

As you pointed out, President Obama may have made many promises on the campaign trail he hasn't kept. But this is one that can be made good, with your help.

In the absence of your support for moving the measure sponsored by Congressman Dent (H.Res. 869) and 75 other members (including us) to increase transparency in the Rules Committee with live broadcasts on the internet, we believe honoring C-SPAN's basic request is the absolute minimum the majority must do on behalf of keeping the American people informed about a process that will affect every health care decision made by every American family, doctor, and small business for decades to come.

Sincerely,



David Dreier



Lincoln Diaz-Balart



Pete Sessions



Virginia Foxx